

Post-operative instructions

Immediately following surgery

01 Remove gauze

The gauze pad placed over the surgical area should remain in place for about 30 minutes. After this time, remove and discard the gauze, then replace it with fresh gauze directly over the surgical area. Repeat this process until the bleeding subsides.

02 Avoid rinsing, spitting, or touching

Avoid vigorous mouth rinsing or touching the wound area after surgery, as this can cause the blood clot to dislodge and lead to bleeding. DO NOT USE A STRAW FOR 1 WEEK. Avoid smoking after the surgery.

03 Take prescribed medication

Start pain relievers BEFORE the local anesthetic begins to wear off (30-60 minutes after your appointment).

04 Restrict activities

Avoid exercise, heavy lifting, bending over, or playing a wind instrument for one week unless otherwise advised by your doctor. Some jaw muscle stiffness is common, especially after longer procedures. This is normal and will improve in 5-10 days. Moist heat and ibuprofen will help relieve some of these symptoms. After tooth extractions, the lower jaw should be opened widely and stretched frequently to avoid stiffness. A good measurement is 3 fingers in height.

05 Ice packs

Place ice packs on the side of your face where surgery was performed. Refer to the section on swelling for explanation.



Bleeding: A certain amount of bleeding is expected following surgery. Slight bleeding, oozing, or a pink tinge in the saliva is normal.

Immediately after surgery or when bleeding is first noticed: Gently rinse or wipe away any old clots, then place a gauze pad directly over the surgical site and bite down firmly for 30 minutes. Repeat if needed. Be sure the gauze is positioned directly over the surgical area—do not chew on the gauze, as this can increase saliva flow, promote bleeding, and risk injury to numb tissues. If bleeding continues, gently remove any formed clot and place a moistened tea bag over the site, biting firmly for 30 minutes. The tannic acid in the tea helps promote clotting. A small amount of blood in the saliva may persist for 2–3 days after surgery. You may wish to use an old pillowcase or towel when sleeping.

If bleeding persists or restarts later at home: Bite on moistened gauze or a moistened tea bag for 45 minutes. Change every 45 minutes until the bleeding stops. If bleeding does not decrease after 3–4 attempts, reposition the gauze to apply MORE direct pressure to the surgical site. To minimize further bleeding, remain calm, sit upright, and avoid physical activity. If bleeding does not subside, please contact the office for further instructions.

Swelling: Swelling around the mouth, cheeks, eyes and sides of the face is not uncommon. Swelling and mild bruising is normally expected and is usually proportional to the surgery involved. This is the body's normal reaction to surgery and eventual repair. Many times the swelling will not become apparent until the day following surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2–3 days post-operatively. However, the swelling may be minimized by the immediate use of ice packs.

Ice is most effective if placed on the cheek for 20 minutes then removed for 20 minutes for the first 36 hours. We recommend a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cold towel. Sleep with your head elevated for the first 3–4 days following surgery. After the first 24–to–36 hours, ice has little beneficial effect to reduce swelling. If swelling or jaw stiffness has persisted for several days, there is no cause for alarm, as this is a normal reaction to surgery.

If the corners of the mouth are stretched, they may dry out and crack. Your lips should be kept moist with an ointment like Vaseline. There may be a slight elevation of temperature for 24–48 hours. If your temperature continues to rise, notify our office.

Pain: For severe pain, take the prescribed pain medication tablets as directed. The prescribed pain medicine might make you feel groggy and will slow down your reflexes.

Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery is usually at its worst 24 to 48 hours after surgery, after that it should subside more and more every day. If pain persists or worsens, it may require attention and you should contact the office for further instruction.

A sore throat may develop. The muscles of the throat are near the extraction sites. Swelling into the throat muscles can cause pain. This is normal and should subside in 2–3 days.

Diet: After General Anesthetic or IV Sedation, liquids should be initially taken. DRINK FROM A GLASS AND DO NOT USE A STRAW, as the sucking motion can cause more bleeding by dislodging the blood clot. You may eat anything soft by chewing away from the surgical sites. High calorie, high protein intake is very important. Nourishment should be taken regularly. You should prevent dehydration by taking fluids regularly. Your food intake will be limited for the first few days. You should compensate for this by increasing your fluid intake. At least 5–6 glasses of liquid should be taken daily. Try not to miss a single meal. You will feel better, have more strength, less discomfort and heal faster if you continue to eat. Avoid thermally hot foods (coffee, tea, soup). Eat cool or luke-warm foods that can be easily chewed. Most people find cool, soft foods (ice cream, yogurt) soothing. Avoid foods with a sharp edge (chips, crackers, toast etc) and particulate foods (popcorn, peanuts, rice) for a week.

Caution: If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. If you are lying down following surgery, make sure you sit for one minute before standing.

Keep the mouth clean: Oral cleanliness is essential to good healing. Clean your mouth thoroughly after each meal, beginning the day after surgery. No vigorous rinsing should be performed until the day following surgery. You can gently brush your teeth the night of surgery. The day after surgery you should begin rinsing at least 5–6 times a day, especially after eating, with a cup of warm salt water (1 teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water). Continue this procedure until healing is complete.

Remember: A clean wound heals better and faster. Stitches dissolve on their own and will not have to be removed. The stitches will fall out within the week (some even come out the same day). Swallowing the stitches is no cause for alarm. Never pull at loose stitches — cut a loose stitch at the gum line. Some stitches may last 2 weeks. On day 5 after the surgery, use the monoject syringe given to you the day of surgery to flush the sockets

Discoloration: As mentioned earlier some discoloration (bruising) is common. The development of black, blue, green,

or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This is a normal post-operative occurrence, which may occur 2-3 days post-operatively. Bruising can take 14 days to resolve. The application of a moist warm towel will help eliminate the discoloration. The towel should be applied continuously for as long as is tolerable, beginning 36 hours after surgery. **(Remember:** ice packs are used for the first 36 hours only). Avoid sun exposure until the discoloration has resolved.

Antibiotics: If you have been placed on antibiotics, take the tablets or liquid as directed. Antibiotics will be given to help prevent or treat infection. Discontinue antibiotic use

in the event of a rash or other unfavorable reaction. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Nausea and vomiting: Nausea and vomiting are common side effects of IV Sedation, General Anesthesia, and many narcotic oral pain medications. In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour, including the prescribed pain medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. You should sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. Once the nausea subsides, you can begin eating solid foods and restart the prescribed pain medicine. If the nausea and vomiting do not resolve, please contact our office.



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